

Yarmolinsky's Career: Promotion Downward?

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Adam Yarmolinsky's ship came in Monday but it docked in a tiny harbor, under cover of night.

The controversial Yarmolinsky had waited for 14 months for an appointment from the White House that never came. The job he wanted, and was promised by one White House official, was general counsel of the Department of Defense, vacant now 15 months.

The job he took was "principal" Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs. "If anyone thinks that is a promotion," said a close observer of Administration affairs, "it serves Lyndon right."

The appointment, when it came, came at 7 p.m. on a slow Monday, an hour after most reporters had left the Pentagon, two days after the President had left for Texas, and three days after Congress adjourned. The appointment is not a presidential appointment, and thus does not require confirmation by the Senate. Therein, Washington observers said, lies the story of the ordeal of Adam Yarmolinsky.

Brilliant but abrasive, the diminutive Yarmolinsky, 43, came to the Defense Department in 1961 as Robert McNamara's chief assistant. He had been a law clerk for Supreme Court Justice Stanley Reed, secretary of the Fund for the Republic, an editor for Doubleday, a Washington lawyer, and a talent scout for President-elect John F. Kennedy during the two-month interregnum between the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations.

As McNamara's top aide, he was generally out of sight of both the Congress and the press — although right-wing journals like the



United Press International
ADAM YARMOLINSKY
... in new job

Dan Smoot Report and super patriots like Maj. Gen. Edwin A. Walker frequently accused him of left-wing activities.

His staff work on racial integration of armed forces facilities irritated Southern congressmen, his aggressively liberal politics irritated Pentagon colleagues, and his parentage (his father is a Russian-born editor and translator, his mother is Babette Deutsch, the poetess) upset the conservatives. Yarmolinsky was a source of friction from his first moments in the Pentagon, but it was not until early 1964 that he emerged as an embarrassment to consensus.

On loan from the Pentagon, Yarmolinsky became de facto deputy to Sargent Shriver in designing policies and administration of the war on poverty. In August, 1964, with poverty legislation before Congress, word was passed that Yarmolinsky was in line for the deputy directorship.

Reaction was instantaneous. Southern Congressmen, particularly the North Carolina delegation, demanded that the Administration jettison Yarmolinsky or

they would vote against the bill. Their demand was met after a key meeting in Speaker McCormack's office in the Capitol.

Later, there were differing versions as to precisely what happened. Some observers blamed the President for what was regarded as an unnecessary sacrifice (the bill passed the House by a handsome margin); others blamed Shriver. Yarmolinsky remained silent after the incident, although it is known he would have preferred a showdown with his Congressional critics.

The show-down never came and Yarmolinsky never faced his accusers. He stayed silent, believing that later in the year a presidential appointment would be forthcoming. It was understood that a firm commitment had been made.

Meanwhile, he went back to his office in the Pentagon, not as McNamara's chief aide but as one of several special assistants, and began a series of part-time jobs for the Administration. For a time, he worked in the Executive Office Building on Panama Canal problems. There were special assignments for McNamara and last June he explained for

the Dominican Republic as part of the Soloman Group, an economic task force headed by Assistant Secretary of State Anthony Solomon.

He remained in Santo Domingo three weeks, and when he returned to Washington there was high praise for the Yarmolinsky Group (as it was known by then) and the work it had done distributing relief packages and making the first attempts at rebuilding the war-torn economy.

It was understood then that the appointment was imminent. There were at most weekly signals of an announcement, but each time something went wrong. Machiavellians in Washington thought they saw a method to the delays.

Once, in Santo Domingo, a friend asked Yarmolinsky what was so fascinating about the Government that he would sacrifice a lucrative law practice or a top university post waiting for an appointment that seemed uncertain at best.

"In government," he said, "you can do more."

Pentagon officials yesterday played down the appointment (which pays \$26,000 per year) and awaited a blast from the right-wingers. McNamara made a point of saying he would personally "certify" Yarmolinsky's reliability and loyalty. The Yarmolinsky appointment was coupled with the announcement that John M. Steadman, Deputy Under Secretary of the Army, would become top special assistant to McNamara, the post Yarmolinsky held until 1964.

Questions remained. Why did Yarmolinsky, after fourteen months in limbo, take the lesser job? How long would he stay at Defense?

Yesterday Yarmolinsky was not answering these or any other questions, but informed sources expected that the man who likes government because he can do more would be in a university post within a year.

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